

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Evergreen Junior High School
3401 South 2000 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109-2999**

April 21-22, 2004



**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Evergreen Junior High School
3401 South 2000 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109-2999**

April 21-22, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
Granite School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
Evergreen Junior High School Administration and Staff	2
School Mission Statement and Belief Statements	4
Members of the Visiting Team	5
Visiting Team Report.....	6
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	6
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	7
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	7
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	8
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	8
Curriculum Development.....	9
Quality Instructional Design	10
Quality Assessment Systems	11
Leadership for School Improvement	12
Community Building	14
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning.....	15
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI	16
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	16
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	16

FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 21-22, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Evergreen Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Lynn Boehme is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Evergreen Junior High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Evergreen Junior High School.

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**Board of Regents Appointments*

10/30/03

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Paul S. Sagers	Assistant Superintendent, Program Services

EVERGREEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Lynn E. Boehme Principal
Merla Bybee Assistant Principal

Counseling

Nora Godin Counselor
John Tomasi Counselor

Support Staff

Janene Hixson Principal's Secretary
Barbara Kofoed Financial Secretary
Janice Wirthlin Counseling Secretary
Lori Lambert Comprehensive Guidance Secretary
Ted Case Head Custodian
Heather Openshaw Assistant Custodian
Brian Bonner Associate Custodian
Gail Hoskins Assistant Custodian
Trina Smith Sweeper
Dan Duncan Sweeper
Bryan Nelson Sweeper
John Morgan ASD Tracker
John Welsh Attendance Tracker
Terry Figueroa Behavioral Tracker
Lynn Cheney Library Aide
Annette Turner ID Teacher Aide
Lana Korgenski Aide, School for the Deaf & Blind
Valerie Casey Aide, School for the Deaf & Blind
David Yourkstetter Aide, School for the Deaf & Blind

Faculty

Dianne Adler
Beth Archie
Carma Barnhart

Jean Bennion
Cynthia Burch
Carol Burmester

Dianne Clegg
Roger Crandall
Wesley Cutler

Patrick Flaherty
Christopher Griffiths
Ginger Gunn
Jodie Horgan
Thomas Jackson
Retta James
Jill Johnson
Mariam Kay
Shauna Keil
Melonie Kent

Robert Kimpel
Robert Kleyweg
Catherine Lambert
Rosanne Markham
Sutton Morgan
Melissa Mullins
Judy Newton
Janet Phinney
Paul Reeves

Sandy Ruconich
(School for the Deaf
& Blind)
Carolyn Sorensen
Patty Spring
Ashley Taylor
Matthew Ulmer
Linda Vass
Deveron Wilkinson
Jean Wright

EVERGREEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION: STUDENT SUCCESS

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Our school is based on *Community of Caring* values: responsibility, family trust, respect, and caring.
- Student learning is the priority in our school.
- All students can learn.
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
- Challenging expectations increase individual student performance.
- A safe environment promotes student learning.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs.
- Ultimately, the responsibility of school success lies with the students.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Gloria Merrill, Murray High School, Murray School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Karen Bishop, San Rafael Junior High School, Emery County School District

Dana Hill, Mountain Ridge Junior High School, Alpine School District

Lee Ann Johnson, Clayton Middle School, Salt Lake City School District

Elizabeth Fielding, Canyon View Junior High School, Alpine School District

Laurie Atkins, Canyon View Junior High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT
EVERGREEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Evergreen Junior High School opened its doors to students in the fall of 1956. Evergreen Junior High School is located in the Millcreek area on the east side of Salt Lake valley and feeds into Olympus High School. Evergreen Junior High School is located in a middle-class, predominately white neighborhood. There are 800 students in grades 7, 8, and 9 at Evergreen Junior High School, with 14 percent being minority and about 25 percent receiving free or reduced-lunch. The ESL population at Evergreen Junior High School is increasing, and currently there are students from 15 different countries. About 8 percent of the students are receiving special education services. In addition, Evergreen Junior High School houses a school for the deaf and the blind, and includes these students in the regular curriculum where possible.

Evergreen Junior High School achieves well above the state average on state CRTs and above the national average on the SAT. Evergreen Junior High School passed in all categories for Annual Yearly Progress as mandated under No Child Left Behind.

Evergreen Junior High School has a very mature faculty that works well together. A few years ago, Evergreen Junior High School received a 21st Century Grant and used the grant to focus on reading and writing across the curriculum. The school is currently focusing on the middle school philosophy and curriculum alignment. The PTA is very active at Evergreen Junior High School, and the school will receive state and national recognition this year for the volunteer effort.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The Visiting Team compliments Evergreen Junior High School on gathering some pertinent data and having the faculty review the data. Evergreen Junior High School understands the demographics of its community and realizes that its minority population is increasing. Enrollment at Evergreen Junior High School has declined during each of the past three years, which has forced a reduction in staff members.

The school collected CRT and SAT results and reported who is learning. However, the staff did not identify the students who are not learning at Evergreen Junior High School. The school scores above the district and state average on the CRT and SAT tests. The profile did not include classroom data on student achievement.

Evergreen Junior High School has 98 percent of its students in attendance each school day. The attendance tracker and secretaries work very well with parents and the juvenile court system to encourage all students to attend school regularly. The surveys indicate that most parents, students, and teachers feel that Evergreen Junior High School is a safe school where appropriate learning is taking place. Parents feel that Evergreen Junior High School provides them with a good understanding of the school's programs, and that the school is doing a good job of preparing the students to continue their education at more advanced levels. The students, parents, and faculty indicated that counselors could do more to help students plan for their future education and career.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Standardized test data was not available for special education students, English language learners (ELLs), students receiving free and reduced-price lunch, or minority students. The Visiting Team recommends that Evergreen Junior High School disaggregate the standardized test data to identify who is not learning. In addition, the Visiting Team would suggest that Evergreen Junior High School identify students who are receiving failing grades by class, grade level, and gender.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Disaggregate data to identify at-risk students.
- Involve the School Community Council in the collection and evaluation of data. It may expedite the process by forming a subcommittee that includes parents, teachers, and at least one administrator and counselor.
- Individual teachers, grade level teams, and departments could begin to collect data to measure the effectiveness of their programs as well as identify students who are struggling.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Evergreen Junior High School received a new vice principal in the first year of the self-study and a new principal at the beginning of the second year. As a result, there were two teachers who attended the training and led the school through the

process. The school completed the process without the help or input of community members or students. The Community Council members felt they were asked to “rubber stamp” items that were brought to them, rather than being involved in the process.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty members for holding regular and extensive meetings to get to know their school. The faculty members felt empowered to suggest ways to improve student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Evergreen Junior High School has a very experienced staff that works well together. Staff members have established time to collaborate on student achievement. Because of their sincere desire to improve student learning and the trust they have developed, the process accurately identified the school's strengths. Since this is the first time Evergreen Junior High School has gone through the new school improvement process, they did not focus on the school's limitations. However, they understand the need to identify who is not learning, and the Visiting Team is confident that they will continue to collect and analyze data to improve student learning for all students at Evergreen Junior High School.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Evergreen Junior High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Lifelong Learning
2. Responsible Citizenship

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

There were many opportunities for faculty members to give input and discuss the vision and mission. However, parents, community members, and students were not involved in the process. The faculty members reached consensus on a mission statement during the first year of the accreditation process, but at the suggestion of a single faculty member the mission statement was changed at the beginning of

the second year of the process. Some faculty members were upset that the school was “throwing out” the mission statement.

The current belief and mission statements have the support of the administration, faculty, staff, parents, and students. Achieving student success will guide the school toward improving learning for all students.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The school’s belief statements address the key issues pertinent to decision making at Evergreen Junior High School. The school could begin to study the latest findings of education research that have implications for student learning. Evergreen Junior High School has time built into its schedule for small study groups, department meetings, and grade level team meetings.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The DRSLs, beliefs, and mission statement are focused on student learning and are aligned. The goals are also aligned with the DRSLs. However, there is an obvious disconnect between the goals and the action steps. The action steps should be tied directly to student learning. In addition, the action steps need to be very specific and measurable. Not every classroom needs to measure each of the goals; however, the school should be unified in working toward the DRSLs. For example, facility improvement is admirable, but does not directly tie to lifelong learning or responsible citizenship.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The Evergreen Junior High School staff collaborates on a weekly basis as a whole staff, as departments, or as grade level teams to identify curriculum needs. The Visiting Team commends the faculty on the well-defined cross-curricular units that align with the State Core and develop learning activities supportive of the Utah Life Skills. The Visiting Team observed instruction aligned to the State Core in many classrooms. Some faculty members review data and update their curriculum on an annual basis.

Extensive and highly commendable efforts have been made, through collaboration with the school community and PTA, to provide student involvement in lifelong

learning activities such as Reality Town, the school musical, DEAR, MESA, MORE, etc.

The Visiting Team suggests that the staff continue to align curricula within their departments as well as with the Utah State Core. The teachers may use different teaching strategies and student activities, but the information the student receives should be consistent from teacher to teacher.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Evergreen Junior High School values the school improvement process, and the staff is working collaboratively to improve student learning. It is suggested that the staff extend their collaborative efforts to include all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, the business community, counselors, and the administration) as they evaluate their DRSLs and set measurable action plan goals.

The development of the curriculum is focused on supporting and challenging all students to excel in their learning. The school is beginning to coordinate curricula across grade levels and to have conversations with the elementary and high schools.

Areas for possible improvement may include (1) improving inclusion practices for special education students to ensure they have access to the Core Curriculum in the least restrictive learning environment, and (2) evaluating the SEOP process to allow each student optimal opportunities for academic success.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

There is a positive academic learning climate at Evergreen Junior High School. The Visiting Team observed many classrooms where the design and selection of instructional strategies and learning activities were based on Core standards, and students were truly engaged in their education. The Visiting Team commends the grade level teams on designing relevant and thought-provoking learning activities. The Visiting Team would encourage the teams to continue to revise their curricula to include activities that require higher order-thinking skills. The Visiting Team would also suggest that the staff explore the use of video clips rather than showing full-length entertainment videos in class.

Evergreen Junior High School has developed many programs during the school day and after school that help students who are struggling. Many teachers

encourage students to stop by their rooms before or after school for individual help.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Evergreen Junior High School has many master teachers who modify the instructional process to meet the needs of individual students. It is commendable that every seventh grader has his/her learning style identified, and that the teachers on the seventh grade team use this information to differentiate instruction.

The Visiting Team would recommend that special education students be included in the regular curriculum as much as possible. There was little evidence that the special education students were actively engaged in learning.

The Visiting Team commends the ESL teachers for providing relevant coursework for the ESL students. The ESL teachers get to know each student, and then work closely with the rest of the staff in suggesting ways to differentiate the instruction to meet the individual student's needs. In addition, there is special tutoring for ESL students four nights a week after school.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Evergreen Junior High School has established a variety of programs to reach all levels of learners. The parents are particularly impressed with the Access program for accelerated learners. A reward system has been developed to motivate students to excel. There are also MORE, MESA, NCCJ, and other tutoring programs that encourage students to become engaged in their education.

One of the strengths of Evergreen Junior High School is its excellent expanded instructional support for student learning. The musical production involves hundreds of students and has extensive support from the entire community. There are also other extracurricular activities in which students may be involved. If an after-school activity bus were available, there might be more students staying for the after-school tutoring or other programs.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

As part of the school improvement process, Evergreen Junior High School should establish a system to measure students' ability to demonstrate proficiency and/or improvement in the DRSLs.

Evergreen Junior High School has not developed schoolwide assessments at this time. The school relies on SAT and CRT assessments to evaluate student progress. The CRT and SAT test results are not disaggregated, so it is difficult to identify students who are struggling. The school has been working on reading across the curriculum, and the STAR test is given as a pre- and post-test to show individual student improvement in reading.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The Visiting Team commends the Evergreen Junior High School faculty members for using a variety of assessment tools. The Visiting Team observed the use of student performance assessment in many classrooms.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Students feel that the assessments of student learning and grading practices are fair. There are a few teachers using common tests, grading rubrics, and grading scales. However, criteria for judging student performance need to be clearly defined by each department. The Visiting Team would encourage the administration and staff to continue to study and implement performance-based assessments.

Each department should begin to develop common assessment tools and common grading scales so that students enrolled in the same course would be assessed in a similar fashion. Each department could then collect data from the common assessments to measure strengths and weaknesses and aid in curriculum development.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

Evergreen Junior High School has a positive, inviting learning climate. The administration, faculty, and students focus on student learning. The administration is developing a good working relationship with the Community Council and the School Leadership Team (SLT).

The administration is experienced, but both are relatively new to Evergreen Junior High School. The administrative team seems to work well together, and the staff supports the positive changes that the new administration has brought to Evergreen Junior High School.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The Visiting Team recommends that the administration work closely with the Community Council and the SLT to collect pertinent data, disaggregate the data, and then use this information to guide the school improvement process.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Evergreen Junior High School has established a culture of continuous learning and reflection. The Visiting Team believes that the administration, Community Council, and SLT will develop a comprehensive assessment system that will include an effective measure for the DRSLs.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The Visiting Team visited with many students from many different cultures and groups, and each of the students reported that he/she feels safe at Evergreen Junior High School. However, the parents expressed concerns about sexual harassment and insensitivity to racial or ethnic fairness in the opinion poll. The administration may want to explore these areas further.

The administration demonstrates the necessary skills to manage the day-to-day operations of the school. In addition, the administration is implementing new ideas to improve the climate for learning at Evergreen Junior High School.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

As a result of the accreditation process, the administration is now focusing on aligning the use of all resources (i.e., human resources, time as a resource for learning, physical resources, instructional resources, and financial resources) with the school improvement efforts.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

After meeting with several parents who are members of the School Community Council, the Visiting Team would encourage the administration to invite the School Community Council into the decision-making process. Allow the School Community Council to help collect the raw data and be involved in discussions about student learning, assessment, staff development, etc.

It appeared that the School Community Council members did not represent a cross-section of the students at Evergreen Junior High School. The administration should make an effort to include the parents of ESL, minority, fee waiver, or struggling students. It is important to hear the concerns of all the stakeholders.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Evergreen Junior High School has established positive and productive working relationships among the school, the parents, and the business community. The PTA is very involved in helping team activities be successful, as well as supporting teachers and administration. The Evergreen Junior High School PTA has received a state award and will be receiving a national award for the number of volunteer hours performed at the school. In addition, the PTA provides communication to the homes of students through a monthly newsletter.

The School Community Council meets monthly and is comprised of the school administration, five teachers, and seven parents. The School Community Council is beginning to understand its role in the school improvement process.

The school play is a community event. Approximately one-third of the students at Evergreen Junior High School participate in the play, and many parents are involved in set building, costuming, supervising students, etc. Extra effort could be made to ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in the play regardless of cost or transportation.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Evergreen Junior High School reaches out to most parents and families through the PTA newsletter and the SEOPs. The SEOP process should be reviewed to encourage greater participation by the parents. The school is beginning to have

dialog with the feeder elementary schools and the high school. The Visiting Team would recommend that this dialog continue so that a collegial relationship can be developed.

The school has many business partners that are willing to donate goods or money to help school programs be successful. Donations from business partnerships are used for student recognition programs, student of the month awards, teacher and employee of the month awards, etc. Also, high school students return to Evergreen Junior High School to tutor the younger students.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The staff appears to be involved in staff development based on individual needs and desires. Current emphasis has been on completing the accreditation process, and on effective teaching methods to use when the school implements the block schedule next fall.

The students leave early on Fridays to allow the staff to meet in faculty meetings, grade level team meetings, and department meetings. The report did not indicate the number of staff members who attend workshops or training each year. Efforts could be made by the administration to assure that opportunities to do so are offered to all staff members.

The Visiting Team would encourage all staff members to take advantage of opportunities available on a district or state level. The administration could lead the staff in the study of research-based instructional strategies, curriculum design, and assessment.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The Evergreen Junior High School administration and SLT supports productive change and continuous improvement, and about 90 percent of the faculty supports the leadership in this effort. A strong desire to do what is best for students is evident at Evergreen Junior High. Articulating a clear, long-range plan may help staff members focus on improvement and staff development goals. This could be included in the action plan for the school. Formal and informal assessments to collect data to verify the effectiveness of staff development may be helpful.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

This chapter is not applicable to Evergreen Junior High. Most public junior high/middle schools in Utah are not accredited through the NAAS, but only by the USOE—it is their choice to join the NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan needs to be revisited to align the plan with the DRSLs. The Visiting Team feels confident that the School Leadership Team understands the need to revise the action plan.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

Evergreen Junior High School's administration, staff, and parents are committed to school improvement; they work well together and like each other.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The school has developed a calendar for staff development and school improvement. The Visiting Team is confident that Evergreen Junior High School will regularly monitor the success of the action plan.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- Evergreen Junior High School has a positive, inviting climate, and the students know their teachers care about them. Students feel safe at Evergreen Junior High School.

- The Evergreen Junior High School staff is cohesive, collaborative, and stable. There are many master teachers at Evergreen Junior High School, and the administration, faculty, and students focus on student learning.
- Evergreen Junior High School has developed powerful grade level teams that have implemented cross-curricular learning activities. In addition, most department members communicate regularly about improving student learning.
- The Evergreen Junior High School faculty members regularly use technology to enhance instruction, and they encourage their students to use the latest technology. Many of the teachers have developed web pages to improve communication with parents and students.
- The staff of Evergreen Junior High School is willing to go the extra mile in helping students succeed. There are many programs in place during the school day and after school to help at-risk students.
- The classified staff members have accepted their role as educators, and it is obvious they enjoy being with students. In addition, the custodial staff is to be commended on the condition of the building.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Evergreen Junior High School revisit the action plan to ensure that the goals are related to the DRSLs and student learning. Also, the goals need to be measurable.
- The administration, the School Community Council, and the School Leadership Team should work together to articulate a long-term staff development plan. Staff development should include the study of best practices and current research in curriculum development, teaching strategies, and student assessment.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Evergreen Junior High School collect additional data to discover who is not learning.
- It is recommended that the Counseling Department become involved in the school improvement process. Parents, students, and faculty members expressed the need for improved communication with the counselors. In addition, with the new block scheduling, the administration should work with the counselors in defining a process to add new elective courses to the master schedule.